

When You're Trying to Find Your Way Home by osaki_nana_707

Series: [dads!Harringrove \[11\]](#)

Category: Stranger Things (TV 2016)

Genre: 1990s, Dad!Billy, Dad!Steve, Drunk!Steve, Loneliness, M/M, Nightmares, Past Child Abuse

Language: English

Characters: Billy Hargrove, Original Characters (Mentioned), Steve Harrington

Relationships: Billy Hargrove/Steve Harrington

Status: Completed

Published: 2018-06-14

Updated: 2018-06-14

Packaged: 2022-04-22 05:00:34

Rating: Not Rated

Warnings: Creator Chose Not To Use Archive Warnings

Chapters: 1

Words: 2,396

Publisher: archiveofourown.org

Summary:

Steve goes monster hunting but finds Billy instead... or rather, Billy finds him.

When You're Trying to Find Your Way Home

Author's Note:

please read the other stories before this one or it might not makes sense. thanks!

When You're Trying to Find Your Way Home

Steve thinks somewhere down the line he made a mistake this evening.

He'd come home without Hannah and that was... okay. He was fine. He *needed* this. A night to himself to *relax* and *get some sleep* , like Colleen had told him. He had come home with a renewed resolve to be happy. He was going to fucking *do it* .

He's pretty sure that resolve crumbled somewhere around the third beer.

He hadn't planned on getting drunk, but without Hannah around he didn't have anything else to do. He'd cleaned the house from top to bottom, mowed and edged the lawn. He'd bought too many groceries at the store so the entire place was stocked. He'd washed his car, detailed it. It had only reached sunset by then, which meant he had a whole night of sitting alone and being paranoid.

So.

Beer.

He'd hoped, if nothing else, it would make the house feel smaller and less empty. All it succeeded in doing was dulling the edges of his vision, which made the walls look like they were shifting, which only made his paranoia worse.

That's how he ended up out here, walking down the side of the road in the middle of the goddamn night with nothing but the clothes on his back and a bat full of nails.

To be fair, it had seemed like a good idea at the time.

He's a few miles from home, his bat swinging slowly by his ankles. The sky is clear tonight, the moon draping itself heavily against the shadowy outline of pine trees. It's a cool evening, a little breezy, but Steve's not cold. The alcohol has warmed up his blood, he thinks.

It's quiet.

Nothing but the sound of his footsteps crunching against the old, cracking asphalt and the whisper of the wind and the sound of crickets. He doesn't hear the shriek of a demogorgan in the distance. He doesn't see anything shifting in the shadows around him. Hawkins and its wilderness are normal.

(*Because I'm out here with this bat* , he thinks because he's drunk and that's the logic that Drunk Steve comes up with).

He thinks he can go home. Maybe he can actually crawl into bed and fucking sleep.

(*But if I leave, the monsters will come out* , thinks Drunk Steve).

Steve grips the bat handle a little tighter.

The gravel shuffles under his feet. The wind blows. It's so *quiet* .

Until it isn't.

Steve hears it well before he sees it, the rumble of an engine in the distance. He comes to a stop at his place at the side of the road and looks over his shoulder as the two headlights suddenly round the corner, illuminating, blinding. Steve squints against the light, and he thinks *I know that car* . He knows the sound of that engine almost as well as he knows his own breathing. He's heard it idling outside of his house most days, idling in the haze at the end of his dreams.

The Camaro flies right by him, close enough that it blows Steve's hair back a bit. He follows it with his eyes as it continues down the road a short stretch and promptly screeches to a stop. Billy is out of the car as soon as it's thrown into park.

“Steve?” he says, soft yet still somehow clear over the sound of the engine. He’s looking at him almost dreamily, like Steve can’t possibly be here or be real right now. Steve’s not sure how much of that look is real and how much of it is just his drunk state projecting.

“Hey,” Steve says casually, like he’s not just standing out in the middle of nowhere looking like he’s about to get into a fight.

Billy leaves the car running, leaves the driver’s side door open. He jogs the short distance to him, and Steve can’t help but stare at the way the moonlight shines in his hair, the way his eyes still seem impossibly blue even in the darkness. He’s so fucking *pretty* it’s not *fair*--

“--Steve. *Steve* .”

Steve blinks, realizing he’s being spoken to. “Hey,” he says again.

“What the fuck are you doing out here?” Billy says like he’s repeating himself.

Steve looks around, then lifts the bat, settling it over his shoulder. “Monster hunting,” he says with a grin, and then laughs.

“Are you drunk?”

“Li’l bit,” Steve says, shrugging.

“Jesus... where’s Hannah?”

“With her mom...” Steve shuffles his feet a little, nearly stumbles. This ground is so uneven, he thinks.

Billy sighs and ropes an arm around Steve’s shoulder and half-hauls him to the car. Before Steve is fully aware of what’s happening, he’s sitting in the passenger seat of the Camaro and Led Zeppelin is on the radio again. Like Parents’ Day.

“How much you had tonight, amigo?” Billy asks, climbing into the driver’s seat. Steve glances at the rearview mirror. Katie is asleep in the backseat. He’s at least sober enough to connect those dots-- Katie couldn’t sleep again, or maybe Billy couldn’t, and he’s been driving

around to calm down whoever needed it the most. He looks at Billy again, this time less through the eyes of infatuation, and he looks exhausted. He looks nervous.

“Steve,” Billy says again.

“I’m fine,” Steve complains. “What, I can’t get drunk?”

“I think it’s pretty clear right now that you can.” Steve sees Billy trying very hard not to smile. It’s like strings of sunshine breaking through the cracks of a rocky ceiling, Steve thinks. So *pretty*, Steve thinks.

“You really think I’m pretty?” Billy snorts, and there’s the smile. Bright and warm and melty. Steve doesn’t even care that he said Billy was pretty out loud.

“I think I already made that pretty clear,” Steve says because his lips have already proven to be too loose to stop words, so he might as well not bother to try.

Billy jumps a little in his skin, looks out at the empty, dark road spread out before him, and he puts the car into drive. He doesn’t comment on what Steve means by that. Instead, he says, “What were you really doing out there, Steve?”

“I told you,” Steve says. “I was hunting monsters.”

Billy rolls his eyes, then turns to look at Steve. Steve stares back at him, unblinking, unfaltering, as sober as he can be given the circumstances. Billy swallows. Steve watches his throat bob with it.

“I wanna kiss your throat,” says Steve.

Billy doesn’t ignore that statement-- he definitely inhales sharply through his nose-- but he doesn’t acknowledge it either. He looks back at the road again. “What do you mean by monsters, Steve?”

“Demogorgan.”

“What?”

Steve laughs, kicking his feet up onto the dashboard. The handle of the nail bat thumps against his thigh. Billy shifts apprehensively in his seat, probably concerned about the flooring getting all scratched up.

“What’s a demogorgan, Steve?” Billy stresses.

“Well,” Steve says, “that depends on who you ask. If you ask a bunch’a nerds across the country, they’ll tell you it’s a D’n’D character.”

“I’m asking you, Steve.”

“If you ask me,” Steve says, head lolling to his shoulder nearest Billy, “It’s the monster with a face that opens up like a flower full’a razor sharp teeth. It’s the son of a bitch that kidnapped Will and took him to another dimension. It’s the monster that... that killed Barbara Holland in my swimming pool ten years ago.”

Billy swallows again. His face is a carefully constructed facade of calm that is completely meaningless against the white-knuckled grip on the steering wheel that betrays it. “Bullshit,” Billy hisses.

“It’s got dogs too,” Steve says. “Same scary face and everything. Fuckin’ beasts. I guess everyone needs a pet. Those ate Dustin’s cat though, so I guess not *everyone* needs a pet.” He laughs. Billy doesn’t. Apparently Billy doesn’t think that’s funny.

“You’re talking like a lunatic, Steve.”

Steve considers this, then shrugs. “You wanna know the real reason we had that reunion?”

Billy glances at him. He looks paler.

“That’s why,” Steve says. “All of us. We fought ‘em.”

“Bullshit,” Billy says again. Steve really hates that word.

“Max too.”

“She would’a told me--”

“Would she?”

Billy’s hands are shaking on the steering wheel. He looks in the rear-view mirror at Katie. She’s still fast asleep.

“You’re trying to tell me some fantasy bullshit,” there’s that word again, “happened here in Hawkins ten years ago, and I didn’t know about it?”

“If I had to put a genre on it, I’d probably say it was more of a horror story.”

Billy’s jaw tightens. He seems to be fighting hard not to start yelling. Steve doesn’t like this look as much as when he’s trying not to smile. “You’re telling me that monsters are real. Like not in the way my dad was a dickhead, but actual, legit abominations.”

“Yeah,” Steve says. “It’s the stuff of nightmares, that I can say for sure.”

“Your nightmares specifically?”

“...Yeah,” he says softly. He looks back out the windshield at the road. He has no idea where they are. Everything in Hawkins kind of looks the same at night.

“Are they still out there?” Billy asks. Steve’s still not sure he believes him entirely.

“Not so far,” Steve says. “Who’s to say they won’t be though? S’why I wanted to make sure. I always gotta make sure. Can’t let ‘em kill anyone else. I can’t... lose...”

Ah, shit. Fuck. His throat is crowded and his eyes are stinging. He slumps down in the seat and sniffs.

“I have to fix what I messed up,” Steve says, voice growing wobbly. He keeps swallowing around it to try and stop it, but it’s not working. “Nancy said we killed Barb. We let ‘er die... but she was wrong because Nancy never would’a did that if I hadn’t dragged her away. It’s my fault.”

Billy's quiet for a long time. "Going to California" has come to an end and Billy hasn't bothered to rewind it, so it's somewhere in the middle of "When the Levee Breaks."

"*Cryin' won't help you, prayin' won't do you no good*," sings Robert Plant.

Billy finally speaks.

"How long... have you been keeping that to yourself?"

Steve rubs at a wet cheek with the heel of his hand. "I'm not the only one who knows."

"That's not what I mean. I'm asking how long have you kept it to yourself that you think it's all your fault?"

Steve sniffs again, staring at Billy's profile.

"Steve."

"I dunno," he says. "Since it happened, I guess."

Billy comes up on a red light. He rolls to a stop and puts the car in park. There are no other cars around. "You never told your wife?"

"No. We weren't supposed to tell anyone about it."

"Why tell me? She was your *wife*, but you're telling me."

Steve keeps staring at Billy, face lit in red, shoulders hidden in blue. He looks like he's about to crack open.

"You got darkness in you," Steve says. "I couldn't destroy her innocence."

"But you can destroy mine?" Billy laughs. It's not a joyful sound.

"Someone destroyed your innocence a long time ago," Steve says, and Billy's laugh turns watery. Steve reaches out and lets his hand slide through Billy's hair. "It's okay," he says, "it's okay."

"For fuck's sake, Steve. *Stop*," Billy says, batting his hand away. It's

gentle though, half-hearted, like he doesn't actually want Steve to stop. "You're telling me you came out here in the middle of the night, trashed, ready to fight a bunch of scary-ass monsters with nothing but a baseball bat?"

"S'got nails in it. An' it worked last time. That and setting it on fire."

"And what if it didn't work? What if the thing fucking killed you? How do you think Hannah would feel about that?"

Steve is quiet for a moment. Then, he sighs. "I didn't really think... I'd actually find anything. I never actually see them anymore, not outside of my nightmares. I just... thought I'd feel better to make sure. I just... didn't... wanna be alone in my house."

"Why didn't you call me?" Billy asks, but they both already know the answer to that.

Still, Steve says, "I'm sorry."

The light turns green. Billy doesn't put the car in drive. He looks back at Steve, the left side of his face lit with emerald light, and he looks so badly like he wants to say something, like it's pressing against the back of his teeth.

The light turns yellow, and Billy is bathed in gold.

Then, it's red again.

The tape has ended. There's no sound but the idling engine, the sound of Steve's breathing, the sound of Billy's breathing, the sound of Katie's breathing.

Billy's hand reaches out and slides along the back of Steve's neck, thumb massaging small circles at the base of his skull. He turns his gaze away, but he doesn't move his hand away. "You and I share some darkness, huh," Billy says quietly. "You talk about it like you know what my darkness is."

"I do," Steve says. Billy's mouth twitches. His thumb keeps rubbing circles on Steve's neck.

"It's-- it's not... he didn't... he didn't even hit me much, y'know... Looking at the shit you've dealt with, my shit seems pretty fucking pathetic. 'Boo-hoo, woe is me, my daddy was mean to me'. I'm a fucking pussy, man."

Billy says it like he's echoing some earlier statement.

"It's not pathetic."

"Yeah, it fucking is. Here you are, facing off against actual monsters, and then I--"

--was facing off against a monster you weren't allowed to fight back," Steve finishes.

Billy's hand stills on his neck.

The light turns green. Yellow. Red.

"It wasn't fair," Steve says. "Sucks."

Billy's eyes are glazed, shining. He turns his face away, and his lip quivers, and all he manages is, "Yeah."

They sit there for a long time.

Green. Yellow. Red.

Green. Yellow. Red.

"Your monsters are dead," Billy says.

"So is yours," Steve says.

Green. Yellow. Red.

"Will you take me home?" Steve asks.

"Yeah."

Billy puts the car into drive, punches the play button on the tape player. Led Zeppelin starts playing again.

It's the last thing Steve remembers before he falls asleep.

Author's Note:

i'm on [tumblr](#).